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PREFACE

Expert Panel Report: *Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma—Update on Selected Topics 2002* (EPR—Update 2002) provides timely information on five selected priority asthma topics. It updates recommendations of the *Expert Panel Report 2: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma* (EPR-2).

The current update was developed using a new approach that will make the asthma guidelines a dynamic and timely guide for practicing clinicians. The National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) Science Base Committee regularly reviews the scientific literature as an ongoing process to identify topics that warrant a more in-depth and systematic review. For this update, the Committee has focused on a few of the more pressing asthma issues rather than updating all topics at once. This approach should provide more expeditious updates in the future, thus adding to the value of the guidelines as a living document.

The Committee recommends to the NAEPP Coordinating Committee (CC) when a review is warranted and, upon concurrence by the CC, an expert panel is convened. Expert panel members are independent thinkers who represent a multidisciplinary group of clinicians and scientists possessing expertise in clinical management. They make recommendations based on their interpretation of the best and most current evidence available.

The 2002 update to the asthma guidelines has been developed under the able leadership of Dr. William Busse, Panel Chair. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute sincerely appreciates the work of Dr. Busse and all members of the Expert Panel in developing this report. Sincere appreciation also goes to the 40

organizations (professional societies, voluntary organizations, Federal agencies) that comprise the NAEPP-CC for their thoughtful review and comments in approving content of this report.

Ultimately, broad change in clinical practice depends on the influence of local physicians and other health professionals who not only provide state-of-the-art care to their patients, but also communicate to their peers the importance of doing the same. We are optimistic that over the next several years, the joint efforts of the NAEPP, its Coordinating Committee member organizations, and committed professionals at the local level will result in extensive implementation of the recommendations in the EPR—Update 2002 and EPR-2. We ask for the assistance of every reader in reaching our ultimate goal: improving asthma care and the quality of life for every patient with asthma and their families.

Publications from the NAEPP can be ordered through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Information Center, P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20924-0105. Publications are also available through the Internet at <http://www.nhlbi.gov/nhlbi/nhlbi.htm>.



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